



University of Leicester

Archaeological Services

An archaeological watching
brief during groundworks at
49-55, Long Street,
Belton, Leicestershire
(SK 446 204)

Leon Hunt



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**An archaeological watching
brief during groundworks at
49-55, Long Street,
Belton, Leicestershire
(SK 446 204)**

Leon Hunt

for

AMU Homes

Planning Application Number 08/ 00025/FUL

Accession Number: X.A37.2011

Checked by Project Manager

Signed: ..



..Date:31.03.2011

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Summary

In accordance with Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment, Policy HE12.3 (DCLG 2010) an archaeological watching brief was carried out during ground-works at 49-55 Long Street, Belton, Leicestershire (NGR: SK 446 204) by University of Leicester Archaeological Services.

The work was commissioned by AMU Homes who were constructing five new dwellings on the site, which had contained a single dwelling with a large garden.

The site lies close to the historic core of the village of Belton and it was felt that there may have been potential for archaeological remains on the site, that may be revealed during the ground-works.

No archaeological features were observed. The archive for the site will be deposited with Leicestershire County Council with accession number X.A37.2011.

Introduction

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) were commissioned AMU Homes to carry out an archaeological watching brief during ground-works at 49-55, Long Street, Belton, Northwest Leicestershire (NGR: SK 446 204).

This archaeological work is in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment, Policy HE12.3 (DCLG 2010).

The watching brief is required as a condition of the planning consent for a new development at the site (Planning Application No. 08/00025/FUL) issued by North West Leicestershire District Council.

CgMs Consulting had set out a written scheme of investigation in the document ‘*Project Design for an Archaeological Watching Brief*’ (Dawson 2010) which has been approved by Leicestershire County Council, Natural and Historic Environment team as historic environment advisors to the planning authority.

Location and Geology

The site lies at the southern edge of Belton on the eastern side of Long Street close to the junction with the B5324 Ashby Road in North West Leicestershire District (Figure 1).

The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain, Sheet 141 (Loughborough) indicates that the underlying geology is likely to consist of Gunthorpe Member mudstone.

The site lies on a low terrace of flat ground at *c.* 75m aOD and is bounded by a hedges and fences to the north, east and south.

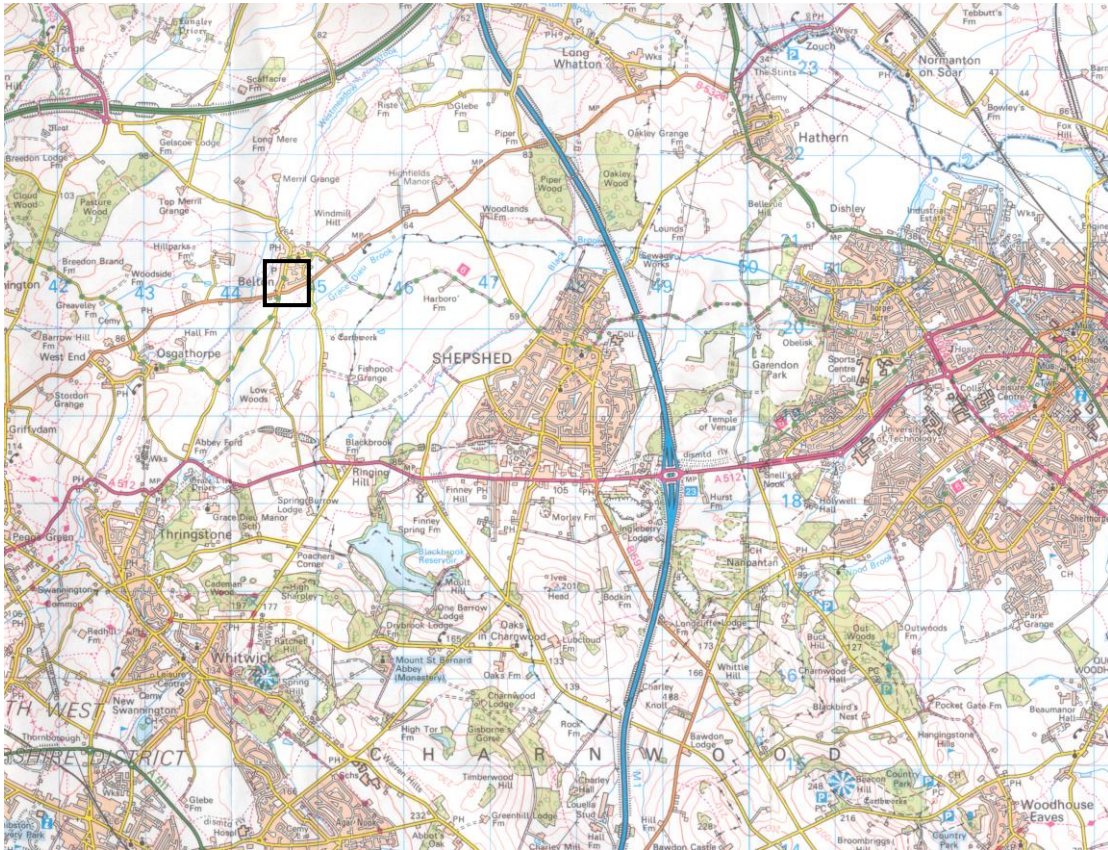


Figure 1: Site Location

Reproduced from OS map Landranger 129 (Nottingham & Loughborough) 1:50000 map by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright 1990
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Historical and Archaeological Background

The site has been identified as an area of archaeological potential from information held in the Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER). This shows that the site lies close to the historic medieval core of Belton.

The site until recently contained a small modern detached dwelling surrounded by a garden.

Archaeological Objectives

The main objective of the archaeological excavation was to determine and understand the nature, function and character of any significant archaeology on the site in its cultural and environmental setting.

The aims of the Watching brief were:

- To determine the presence, date, character, integrity, state of preservation and depth of burial of any archaeological deposits.

- To examine the potential of the site in its relation to its environment, economy, land use and development from the prehistoric to post medieval periods. In particular the results are anticipated to reflect the medieval origins of the historic village.
- To examine evidence from the site for palaeoenvironmental and/or economic development.



Figure 2: Location of the site within Belton. Scale 1: 1250.
Provided by developer

Methodology

All work followed the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct* (2010) and adhered to their *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (2008).

The project involved the supervision of overburden removal and other groundworks by an experienced professional archaeologist during the works.

The building that once stood at the centre of the site (see Figure 2) had been removed prior to the start of the groundworks and a small access track had been laid to facilitate the moving of the heavy machinery onto the site.

The soils were removed by a CASE CX130 tracked excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket.

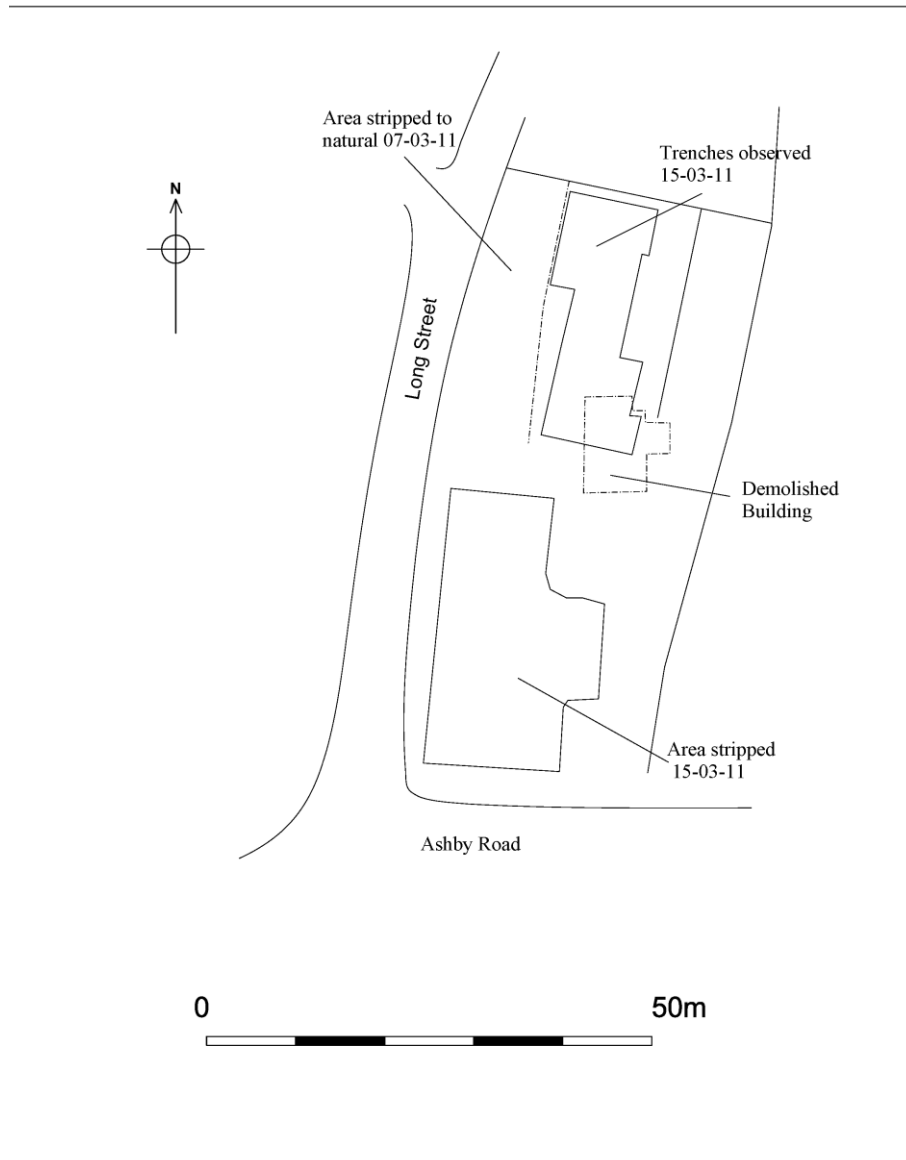


Figure 3: Plan of observations carried out during watching brief

Results

The archaeologist visited the site on 7th March 2011 and groundworks associated with the construction of the new dwellings were observed.

During this initial visit the northern part of the site, which still contained a level lawn was stripped of its turf, revealing a dark brown silty topsoil with no apparent stones (Plates 1 & 2). At the street frontage side of the site (west), a small 0.50m bank led up from the kerbside onto the lawn. This was removed to construct an access drive from the north-western edge of the site into the centre of the site. The small bank and the upper soils of the lawn area were removed by the machine in a 5.5m wide strip revealing 0.20m (0.40m across the bank) of dark topsoil and 0.1m of brown silty clay subsoil over red clay. No archaeological features or archaeological artefacts were observed during this strip (Plate 3 & 4).

A further visit was undertaken on 15th March 2011. By this time the area at the front of the site, which was watched previously, had been covered in hard core. Foundation trenches were then excavated on the northern part of the site for the first two new dwellings (Plate 5). The foundation trenches were excavated with a 1.6m wide toothed bucket to depth of 1m. The trenches were all examined for archaeological deposits but no features or artefacts were located. The sequence of deposits for the trenches was 0.2-0.25m of mid-brown subsoil over reddish brown and blue clay sub-stratum (Plate 6). This appeared uniform over the whole of the northern area, except in the area where the demolished building once stood, where the ground was fairly disturbed or contained no remnants of subsoil in places.

The southern part of the site was then stripped with a toothless ditching bucket of around 0.2-0.3m of topsoil/subsoil exposing the red sub-stratum (Plate 7). No archaeological features or artefacts could be seen during this strip.

Conclusion

The site at Long Street, Belton had some potential for archaeological deposits as it lies just outside the historic core of the village. It was thought possible that buildings from the medieval or post-medieval periods existed on the plot before the modern period. Until recently the site would appear to have been an open field before the now demolished property was built on the site sometime during the latter part of the 20th century.

The upper soils were stripped under observation and trenches were then excavated under supervision. As the sub-stratum could be identified on the southern part of the site after the area was stripped, it was not felt necessary for the foundation trenches to be observed.

No archaeological features were identified during the work and no archaeological finds were recovered. It appears that the site had not been subject to human settlement or pre-modern agricultural activity.

Acknowledgements

ULAS would like to thank Mark Wagstaff, Duncan Farrow and DJF Construction for their help and co-operation with this site.

Archive

The archive for this project will be deposited with Leicestershire County Council Heritage Services with accession number X.A37.2011 and consists of:

- 1 Unbound copy of this report
- 2 watching brief recording sheet
- 1 Photographic list
- 1 CD digital photographs
- 1 Contact sheet of digital photographs
- 1 contact sheet B & W photographs
- 1 set B & W negatives
- 1 Drawing List
- 1 A3 Sheet of permatrace

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31-03-2011



Plate 1: Work in progress stripping grass area, looking south-east



Plate 2: Grass area stripped of topsoil, looking north north-west



Plate 3: Work in progress at street frontage, looking north



Plate 4: Street frontage stripped, looking north



Plate 5: Work in progress on trenches in centre of site, looking south



Plate 6: Post-excavation shot of foundation trench, showing west facing section, looking south-east



Plate 7: Southern area stripped to sub-stratum, looking west

Appendix: OASIS Information

Project Name	An archaeological watching brief during groundworks at 49-55, Long Street, Belton, Leicestershire
Project Type	Watching brief
Project Manager	Patrick Clay
Project Supervisor	Leon Hunt
Previous/Future work	No/No
Current Land Use	Garden
Development Type	New Housing
Reason for Investigation	PPS 5
Position in the Planning Process	Post determination
Site Co ordinates	SK 446 204
Start/end dates of field work	07-03-11 to 15-03-11
Archive Recipient	Leicestershire County Council Heritage Services
Study Area	c. 2 hectares

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